



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to Report by Head of Mission to Moldova, Bill Hill**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Bruce Connuck  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 10, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes Ambassador Hill back to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his excellent report on the situation in Moldova. Ambassador Hill and his staff have continued to conduct their work with the utmost professionalism and dedication, and we are indeed fortunate to have such topnotch personnel in Moldova.

As we noted at last week's Permanent Council meeting, the United States welcomed the opportunity to participate as an observer, along with the EU, at the October 27th and 28th round of negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict. We look forward to the next meeting in this format, scheduled for December 15th and 16th.

The United States reiterates its support for a peaceful settlement to the conflict that fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

We agree with Ambassador Hill's appraisal that an International Assessment Mission to Moldova's Transnistria region to evaluate conditions with respect to democratization would be very useful. We urge the Permanent Council to consider forming this mission as soon as practicable in 2006, after the Transnistrian Supreme Soviet Elections scheduled for December 11, which will not be internationally recognized.

We applaud the efforts of the OSCE Mission to Moldova to maintain calm and to decrease tensions in such an unstable environment. Interventions by Mission military members and constant contacts between the Mission and authorities on both sides of the Nistru River have defused crises and potential crises before they escalated.

The United States commends the outstanding work by the Mission to finally resolve the status of Moldovan-language, Latin-script schools in Transnistria. As the Mission's report notes, settling this issue has removed one of the biggest sources of tension between the sides. We also appreciate the support to the Mission's efforts in this area provided by the embassies of Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

We reiterate our calls, conveyed in several previous Permanent Council meetings, for the Transnistrian authorities to allow farmers in the Dorotscaia region access to their fields. For two years, Transnistrian guards have prevented these farmers from earning their living. Restoring their access to their fields and confiscated farm equipment would be a humanitarian gesture of good faith that would also go a long way toward reducing tensions.

Mr. Chairman, it is lamentable that six years after the Istanbul Summit, the Russian Federation's commitments to withdraw its forces from Moldovan territory have not been fulfilled. We reject any suggestion that fulfillment of these commitments is linked to a political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. We reiterate our call on Russia to resume withdrawal of its forces immediately, and note once again that doing so before the OSCE Ministerial Council would send a strong signal of progress and good faith on Russia's part.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we also reiterate our calls on the Moldovan government to fully implement the recommendations of the ODIHR's report on the March 2005 elections. While it appears some progress has taken place, the Head of Mission's report is clear that a number of electoral reform issues remain to be addressed. We fully support the Mission's democratization assistance to the Moldovan government, and urge the Permanent Council to ensure the Mission has the resources to conduct this work effectively.

Once again, I would like to thank Ambassador Hill for his clear and objective assessment of the situation in Moldova, and wish him all the best in his continuing endeavors.

Thank you.